



NOTES FROM THE:

Professional Military Comptroller School

by Mr Bryan C. Oberg

Growing Stronger!

Comptrollership at all levels is getting better! What qualifies me to say that? The unique perspective I have gained as a faculty member at the DoD Professional Military Comptroller School (PMCS). Two major influences have shaped my perspective and given me positive feelings about our future. The influences are guest speakers who lecture here and students who attend our course.

Almost a year ago, I was given the extraordinary opportunity to represent my agency, the Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS), as a PMCS instructor. Since my arrival, I have met and spoken with many guest speakers who are leaders from across the DoD financial community. Our conversations have exposed me to dozens of candid perspectives and opinions from those "in the know" on what we have accomplished, problems we face, and issues on the horizon.

For example, auditors are reporting greater levels of cooperation from people in the field. This improves the outcome of audits, a benefit we all can appreciate. Next, DFAS continues to implement system changes at a record pace to help build a better tomorrow with its customer-partners. Additionally, the agency is concentrating its policies and energy on making today's workload move faster and more efficiently. Finally, the Services' overall level of satisfaction with finance and accounting support continues to rise as DoD completes each milestone in standardizing finance and accounting systems.

How many times have you heard the phrase people are our strength? Sound trite? It shouldn't. After a year's worth of dialogue with our leaders, whether those discussions occurred in the PMCS hallway, over dinner, or during late-night car rides to and from the airport, I am convinced top management knows that people are indeed our strength. It is important for you to know that the recurring theme underscoring almost every conversation has been how people, systems, and processes are getting better all the time! Our leaders believe it; so do I.

This brings me to our students. My perspective about the future is affected most by those who

attend our course. I am certain the comptroller community has the greatest share of quality people in DoD because I meet 50-60 of them every class. Our students include accountants, analysts, auditors, budget specialists, financial managers, systems people, and occasionally a stray chaplain with financial management as an additional duty. Incidentally, the chaplain scored the highest in his class on the final exam.

Regardless of their particular discipline, PMCS students are motivated and inspiring to watch. Within only a few days after beginning classes, they quickly adapt to and accept each other's diversity. Their keen ability to cooperate and learn from one another allows them to move forward smartly. Together, they create an irresistible momentum underpinned with integrity and dedication.

PMCS students give me confidence to believe we have what it takes to be the lead community in DoD for action and innovation. After all, any group of people who can make success happen so effectively in a time-constrained microcosm such as PMCS, definitely can help their respective offices flourish. The talent, good ideas, and enthusiasm students demonstrate at PMCS are just additional indicators that business is getting better.

The two influences I have described above prove to me we are on the right track. Despite customary setbacks, occasional system anomalies, frustrating bottlenecks, and human error, we will succeed. With leaders aware of our problems and doing their best, and with all of us pitching in and working hard to make our livelihood more effective, how can we do otherwise?

Over the next few years as comptroller agencies rapidly change, keep in mind how cooperation and learning from each other enables us to move ahead. Communicate with your supervisors and most importantly, with each other, so we can continue helping lead DoD into the next millenium. Then, look around you and decide if I am correct when I say we are growing stronger!

